

WSDOT
Commerce Corridor Feasibility Study
Steering Committee Meeting Minutes
July 1, 2004

Attendees:

Dan O'Neal (WSDOT, FMSIB)	Senator Dan Swecker
Senator Tim Sheldon	Arno Hart (Wilbur Smith Assoc)
Tom Jones (Wilbur Smith Assoc)	Barbara Ivanov (WSDOT)
Jack Middleton (HWA)	Joy Dopita (WSDOT)
Sherilyn Anderson (UBS Financial Svcs)	Elizabeth Stratton (WSDOT)
Rosemary Siipola (CWCOG/SWRTPO)	Bob Josephson (HNTB)
Charlie Howard (WSDOT)	Linda Mullen (WSDOT)
Sophie Hartshorn (Wilbur Smith Assoc)	

Chair Dan O'Neal opened the meeting at 8:05am at the WSDOT Tacoma Maintenance Facility.

Communications:

Linda Mullen recommended that WSDOT staff provide a central face at all public meetings and use the consulting team as technical experts. She expressed concern that citizens may be jumping ahead to conclusions, and misunderstanding the purpose of the study.

Action items:

- Barbara Ivanov and Linda Mullen will train region WSDOT staff so they're able to act as our public face at all future public meetings.
- Linda Mullen, Barbara Ivanov, Arno Hart and Tom Jones will take citizen input and develop a FAQ sheet. The standardized response will need to tie into GMA, environmental and transportation issues.

Charlie Howard said that the project scope didn't include a full public process. He asked if we plan to change the scope at this time.

Arno Hart said that the resistance has come from the Mt. Baker Foothills area. He added that if you try to develop a corridor in an area with high local resistance, the private sector will be less interested due to increased risks.

Senator Swecker asked if the study team is capturing ongoing public input and whether they will be able to provide alternative routes for decision makers if particular regions are strongly opposed to the corridor.

Tom Jones reported on public reaction to date. He said that it has been localized to eastern Skagit and Whatcom counties, and has been overwhelmingly negative.
Arno Hart attended the Mt. Baker Foothills Economic Development Association forum in Deming. They are requesting 25 minutes on the July 16 agenda.

Senator Sheldon recommended structuring forums to disseminate information.

Linda said we need to provide an initial overview so that attendees have a baseline of information, and follow with a public comment period. The chair may flex the public comment period if many attendees sign up to speak.

Forum Agenda: (speakers to sign up for 3 minutes)

- A. Study origin and purpose - Chair Dan O'Neal
- B. Introduce legislators present and explain agenda
- C. Describe concept (what it is, and what is not) – Arno Hart
- D. Review definition of feasibility – Arno Hart
- E. Describe alignment concept – Arno Hart
- F. Summarize key issues – Consultant Team
 - a. Environmental, Social and Community
 - b. Financial
 - c. Engineering
 - d. Legal/Institutional
- G. Outline next steps in study – Arno Hart
- H. Public agency panels: Explain how regional transportation plans addresses N-S corridor issues
- I. Public comment: official legislative hearing

Senator Swecker and Charlie Howard recommended asking all the affected RTPO's to participate in panels.

Senator Swecker offered to hold a public hearing immediately following the July 16 forum; it would include House and Senate. He said that we should invite the Mt. Baker EDA representatives to present their report and let them know that the legislature will hold a hearing in their community at a later date.

Action items:

- Legislative staff will need to manage public hearing notification.
- Tom and Charlie will connect with RTPO's and plan their presentations.

Room set up:

- Steering Committee and panel at front tables
- Audience seated theatre style

Private sector energy: Tom reported on utility and energy company interviews; noting that those who have access to their own ROW are not interested in relocating to a new corridor, but those that do not may have interest.

Next Steering Committee will be Tuesday, October 26, 2004 from 8 – 10am at the WSDOT Tacoma Maintenance facility.

Adjourned at 9:50am.